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ABSTRACT

Williamsburg County, South Carolina, is an almost entirely rural area near the coast. Although nearly 50% of the population is under 21, there has been a sharp decline in population since its high in 1950. The outmigration, prounounced for black youth, is caused by a lack of industrial opportunities, although there is slow, steady industrial growth in the county. Although the economic base of the county is agriculture, the per capita income is low due to the seasonal nature of many jobs. Agriculture itself if changing, with fewer farmers on larger farms producing $57.5 million annually in farm crops. Crop diversification, introduced in the 1920's, has made the county a leader in agricultural production in South Carolina. The black population is twice that of the white but a "home rule" form of government, desegregation, and civil rights have caused an equitable racial balance in county government. Seven local leaders interviewed in 1978 are generally optimistic about current and future development in Williamsburg County. They note recent improvements in government organization and county services, including the Williamsburg Council on Aging. The Council, chartered in 1974, provides county-wide programs and services for the elderly on an annual budget of $185,000. (SB)

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A Profile of Williamsburg County, South Carolina

Clemson University
College of Agricultural Sciences
South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

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S-120 Technical Committee
Social Organization for Development
of Low-Income Rural Counties

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Profile - Objectives A and B
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INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared as part of a research/extension project conducted by the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at Clemson University in Kershaw, Union and Williamsburg Counties of South Carolina. This is part of Southern Regional Project S-120, Social Organization for Development of Rural Counties in the South. In each county, economic, service, and health services and facilities were examined. Specific areas of development were also examined. In Williamsburg County, the Council on Aging was studied as an example of one development accomplishment.

The first section of this report is descriptive in nature. It reviews the history and physical characteristics of the county, as well as the demographic changes that have occurred in Williamsburg over the past two decades. The report will also deal with economic and service issues in the county. Part of the information presented in this descriptive section is based on interviews conducted with seven community leaders in the fall of 1978. Their opinions and perceptions of development in Williamsburg County are presented in the next segment. A questionnaire on progress for the Council on Aging was also completed by these respondents. It will be discussed in the last portion of this bulletin.

HISTORY

In 1790 an explorer, whose name has been lost to history, set out from Charleston to explore the "back country" lowlands of South Carolina. He sailed more than a hundred miles up the Black River before stopping at a high embankment where a white pine tree stood. The largest tree was similar to those found in New England at the time and its wood was favored for the building of ship masts. The explorer returned to Charleston and reported having chopped a broad arrow into the bark designating the destination of his journey and a tree for the king. According to Williamsburg historian William Boddie, this white pine "caused King George II to reserve in every grant of land in these parts all white pine trees forever as the sole property of the king." Thus the embankment became known as Kingstree, the future county seat of Williamsburg County.

In 1732 a group of Scotch-Irish settlers received a grant from King George II to settle the area. This colony of forty people under the leadership of Roger Gordan, settled on the banks of the Black River very near the present site of Kingstree. The colony flourished, raising corn, hemp, flax, and cattle. Each male settler was given a half acre town lot and fifty acres of land in the township for his family. In 1736 they formed a Presbyterian Church and, in 1738, built a sanctuary which was used until 1890. It was the largest building in the county until the Revolutionary War.

Williamsburg County, named for a son of King George, II, remained peaceful until 1776 when Thomas Lynch rode south from Philadelphia to inform Williamsburg people of the Declaration of Independence. Men from the county served as soldiers in the war and, after the Battle of Charleston in 1780, they formed their own fighting unit, Marion's Brigade. The brigade served for two years under General Marion. In March, 1785, by an act of the General Assembly, Williamsburg District was formed by cutting off a portion of what was then the Georgetown District. The district became an organized county in 1804.

In 1852, the State of South Carolina voted to secede from the United States. At this time Williamsburg's populace was one of two classes, wealthy plantation owner or slave; nevertheless, sentiment of the citizenry was divided on the issue of secession.

By the time Fort Sumter signaled the beginning of the Civil War in April 1861, Williamsburg had sent many sons to the Confederate military service. The county was well stocked with supplies and did not feel threatened in the fall of 1861 when the Northerners blockaded South Carolina ports. By Christmas, however, the blackade had its effect and the county realized the grim situation. By the war's end it had lost three-hundred of its twelve-hundred soldiers and another three-hundred were wounded.

Williamsburg's population of plantation owners and slaves was unprepared for reconstruction. Three generations of wealthy whites had become dependent on slave labor. Whites had lost their manual labor skills and had failed to diversify their crop production. Prior to the war, the dominant crop, cotton, could be used to purchase food and commodities. After the war, both the economy and government were in upheaval. Blacks, a majority of the county population, had the vote for the first time. Blacks also held political office and power for the first time. This inversion of the racial power structure was short-lived, however, and the late 19th and early 20th century saw a strong segregationist stance as whites regained county control. While the county still has a majority black population, the effects of home rule, desegregation, and the civil rights movement have all helped to establish a more representative and equitable racial balance in government. Community leaders now report a more harmonious racial relationship and express optimism concerning a more participatory governmental process.

As will be seen in the following segment of this report, Williamsburg has also diversified its agricultural and forest products base. By the 1920's the major crop, cotton, was invaded by the boll weevil. The second major crop, tobacco, also proved to be an important but not always secure commodity.

Education programs, emphasizing diversification of farm enterprises, was begun in the 1920's through the South Caorlina Cooperative Extension Service. As a result of the combined efforts of farmers and educators, production of agricultural and forest product commodities make Williamsburg County a major producer in the state.

TOPOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Located in the coastal plains region of the state, Williamsburg County covers 931 square miles. It is the seventh largest county in the state in land mass. It remains substantially rural with a population density of 37 persons per square mile. The land is predominantly flat with the elevation varying from fifteen to ninety-four feet above sea level. Beginning only 30 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean, some of the land is below the water table and is swampland. The county is bounded to the south by the Santee River and is traversed by the Black River.

The climate in Williamsburg is temperate and is classified by Koppen as being Cfa, that is -- humid subtropical. The growing season in Williamsburg County averages 234 days. The average date of the first frost is November 8; the average last freeze date is March 19. The mean annual temperature is 64.5 with an average of 48.6 degrees in January and 80.6 degrees in July.

The county is used widely by sportsmen; deer, duck, quail, and squirrel are in abundance. Sportsmen fish the rivers for trout, bream, and warmouth.

DEMOGRAPHIC SKETCH

In 1950, Williamsburg County reached its highest population with 43,807 residents. (See Table 1) In 1910 Williamsburg County had a larger population than it did in 1976. The 1976 estimated population is 35,000, up slightly from the official 1970 figure of 34,243.

The movement of people out of Williamsburg County is apparent in the above figures. The actual magnitude of the outmigration is masked by these simple figures, however, since the birth rate for the period 1950-1976 is more than twice the death rate. Much of this population loss is due to outmigration of young blacks from the county. In his book on Carolina low-country migration patterns, The Chicken Bone Special, Dwayne E. Walls says that the population movement primarily involves young blacks immediately after high school graduation.

Walls states that approximately 10 percent of the young black graduates go on to college. "Maybe ten or fifteen percent of the graduates would find a job around here (in a three or four county area). The rest would be gone by the end of the summer." (p. 72).

The primary reason for this population loss has been the lack of industrial employment opportunities in the county. For example, in 1969, the county's largest employer had 2,100 applicants on file in 1969, for one of the firm's 700 jobs.

According to provisional population estimates for 1976, there are nearly twice as many black residents as white residents in Williamsburg County. (See Table 2) During the period between 1950 and 1970, the white population varied by only 816 people. The change in the number of blacks was much greater, however, with a decrease between 1950 and 1970 of 8,768. Between the 1970 census and the provisional estimates for 1976, the trend has apparently reversed. A representative from Williamsburg County Development Board states their figures show an overall in-migration of 1.1 percent into the county for 1977, but data are not available by racial groups.

Williamsburg County is almost entirely rural. (See Table 3) While in 1950 it was 91.6 percent rural, this figure had decreased by less than two percent to 89.7 percent rural in 1970.

In spite of outmigration, the county remains, as of 1970, heavily populated by young people. (See Table 4) In the county, nearly 50 percent of the population is under 21 years of age. This is seven percentage points higher than the 43 percent figure for the state as a whole. The county has a senior citizen population of nearly 8 percent to about 7 percent for the state.

In 1970, Williamsburg County's adult residents (over 25) were a year and a half behind the state in median school years completed. The average for Williamsburg citizens was 9 years, while the average for South Carolina as a whole was 10.5 The disparity is larger for blacks than whites, however. While whites in the county have finished 10.9 years of school, blacks, on the average, have completed only 7.2 years.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1950

Williamsburg County remains heavily dependent on agriculture for its economic base. In 1976 it ranked third in the state for cash receipts from farm marketings of crops. It was also 15th out of the 46 counties in receipts from livestock. In 1977 the county's major crops were tobacco, (value of production $20,264,000); soybeans, (value of production $7,322,000); and grain corn (value of production $5,692,000). Despite these

large production values, the per capita income in Williamsburg is low compared to state standards. In 1975 it ranked 43rd out of the 46 counties with a per capita annual income of $3,495. This was considerably less than the state average of $4,615 for 1975 and over $2,000 less than the national average of $5,852.

The trend in Williamsburg County since 1940 has been an increase in the percentage of the labor force entering manufacturing employment. From 1940 to 1978, for example, the proportion of workers involved in manufacturing rose from 5.8 percent to 19.9 percent. During the same period, the figures for those employed by agriculture decreased from 75 percent of the labor force to about 45 percent. By 1976 even fewer in Williamsburg's labor force were farmers; the figure was down to 43 percent of the workers.

The trend in Williamsburg County has been toward agribusiness. Fewer, but larger farms produce tobacco, corn, and soybeans with increasing efficiency. It now requires fewer persons per farm to produce even more produce as ten years ago. Many of those who were at one time farmers have now moved to industrial or service employment. By 1970 Williamsburg had 19 major industrial employing firms and a more diversified economic base. (See Table 5) The largest employing firms are Travenel Laboratories and Tupperware Plastics. Textiles are also important to the economy, providing more than 1,000 jobs as of 1978. Other large employers include Colonial Rubber Works and GB Fermentation Industries.

Even with expanding economic development, the unemployment figures for Williamsburg County have been high. The figure stood at 8.6 percent for 1976, but is much higher during the winter due to the seasonal nature of agricultural work. Overall, Williamsburg has had slow but steady industrial growth and a gradually declining proportion of its citizens producing its more than 57 million dollars (1977) of farm crops.

DIRECTION AND CHANGE - LOCAL PERCEPTIONS

When interviewed, leaders in Williamsburg County generally voiced positive opinions about development in their area. One characterized development in the county as "continued acceleration," another said it was "gaining momentum." Since 1970, the county has had substantial growth in terms of both industrial and service employment. During the last eight years, Williamsburg County has acquired nine new industries. Some, like Tupperware, employ large numbers of workers. One industry was closed due to bankruptcy but was transferred to local ownership and continues to employ around 200 workers. Despite industrial growth, one community leader said unemployment ran as high as 20 percent when the winter months eliminated seasonal farm work. For this reason, continued industrial growth is sought.

The county has had a large number of service improvements in the last five years due to the combined efforts of local leaders and funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. A recent accomplishment has been the building of 100 new housing units. Of these units, 30 are reserved for senior citizens. There is currently a needs assessment survey being conducted in Hemingway to underscore the need for a similar project there.

Many improvements have taken place in the sewer and water systems of the county. Ninety-nine thousand, five hundred dollars was recently spent to improve the Rosehill Water System. In Hemingway, a $600,000 water and sewer system expansion has been completed. Another similar project is out for bids until January, 1979. It will be in the Donnelly area. A new well has been completed at the Manpower Center, greatly improving the water supply to the area.

There have been improvements in roads in the county also. A one million dollar project is currently underway that will re-surface several roads and make improvements in the highway surrounding the hospital. Improvements are being made around the entrances and exits to several industries as well.

The area of human services has seen major county emphasis. Of concern to the citizens of Williamsburg was the plight of its elderly. Many of the senior citizens had little contact with the outside community and had deficient medical and nutritional care. The result, since its inception in 1974, has been an extensive Council on Aging program that employs over 30 people and serves several thousand elderly. The Council will be further discussed as a special development issue later in this bulletin.

Other health services have been improved in the county, as well. The Mental Health Center and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center have both expanded their services. The Department of Social Services will have new facilities in 1979. Rural health care resources are also growing with the recently completed Hemingway outpatient clinic and the operation of eight rural health outreach units. Because the county is so large in terms of land mass but so sparsely populated, outreach clinics have been necessary to meet the needs of the population. In the city of Kingstree, a hospital expansion costing $1.2 million is projected for 1979. This will augment the services provided through the new medical office complex and the existing hospital facilities. The county has been training its citizens in emergency medical care, too. Williamsburg's Technical and Vocational Center offers emergency medical training courses. One result of additional training has been an expanded ambulance and rescue squad. Though privately owned, the service is provided for all citizens of the county. One leader commented

that the expansion of these services resulted in "a citizenry more aware of the needs for and the availability of human services." Thus, not only have services grown but also the public's willingness to use them.

Of major political interest to leaders of Williamsburg County has been the switch to a new form of representation for the county called home rule. In the past county legislators also served as the County Council, however, a statewide reorganization of county governments in 1974 has led to a new form of representation in 1978. The county's elected council expanded from 5 to 7 representatives due to redistricting in the county. The new representation has resulted in a more racially balanced board.

According to several leaders this implementation of home rule, which goes into effect in January 1979, should create a more efficient and representative governing body. The effect of home rule so far, however, has been considerable confusion. One controversy has surrounded the extent of power in the county supervisor's office. While most respondents felt the prospects for better government were brighter as a result of the county Supervisor/County Council form of management, most agreed with the leader who said "its present functioning is questionable, because few people understand it fully. We are waiting on rulings concerning the local governments' power from the Attorney General's office. Once the kinks are out and the power struggles cease we should have a more efficient ruling body."

When questioned about the future of development in Williamsburg County most leaders were optimistic. They mentioned the close work between the Industrial Development Board, the Regional Planning Councils, and local city and county governments. The result of this work has been a push toward industrial development and the acquisition of federal development grant monies. Leaders have been careful to plan for a diversified economic base and agriculture is now becoming diverse. One project, begun a year ago, was the development of a new crop - sunflowers.

A few of those interviewed stated they did not want further industrialization, that they preferred a slower, more agricultural environment; but, they too realized industry was necessary to aid in reduing the high rates of unemployment in the county. One respondent also stated that the number of people in welfare programs and on unemployment slowed community progress. In general, however, those interviewed found the prospects for future development excellent. Concluded one leader in the county, "Many northern industrialists are interested in us because we have a large labor supply that is anti-union in sentiment. We also have a better climate. We have all religious denominations and they all work together beautifully. We have both good private and public schools and we welcome new industry. I think its a good place to live."

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUE: WILLIAMSBURG COUNCIL ON AGING

When asked about development in the county, Williamsburg leaders frequently mention service needs. One essential service mentioned was a senior citizens program. The formation of the council on Aging, therefore, has been the subject of closer examination for this report. Six respondents, all of whom were or are currently active in the operation of the program, were interviewed in the fall of 1978. The objective of this research was to learn as much as possible about the establishment and implementation of the Council on Aging.

According to 1970 census data, 8% of Williamsburg's population was over 65 years of age. There are 3,812 people or 11% of the population over 60 years of age. Of this total 46% are white and 54% are black. In 1974, concern for the county's elderly poor prompted community leaders to meet to discuss the possibility of organizing a county council on aging. Attorney Wallace Connor, legal counselor for the group, began taking the necessary steps to obtain a charter for the Williamsburg County Council on Aging on August 15, 1974. Two women, Elizabeth Book and Judith Patterson, were authorized to apply for incorporation as an eleemosynary organization. The Council was chartered on September 18, 1974. Its purpose was the "encouragement and promotion of acts for the benefit of elderly citizens."

During this time CRD Specialist Nelson L. Jacob was holding Community Resource Development meetings in Williamsburg County. At these community meetings the need for a senior citizens program was identified. As a specialist in social organization, Mr. Jacob was asked to help organize and implement the procedures necessary to obtain grant funding for the program. In January, 1975 an organizational meeting was held. The thirty-four people attending were informed by Mr. Jacob that $17,000 was available for a Council on Aging Program. At this meeting the by-laws of the Council were passed and a Board of Directors was elected. The Council's first operating budget came primarily from federal Title III funds provided by the Older Americans Act of 1965. Since then the Council has been supported through a variety of local, regional, state, and federal sources. The South Carolina commission on Aging provided initial funds for information and referral services for the elderly. The Waccamaw Regional Planning Council also procured funds. The Williamsburg County Council and the town of Kingstree municipal government have contributed funds and provided office space for the program.

According to the respondents, the Council on Aging has been the result of the cooperation of many community leaders and organizations. While all of those interviewed mentioned Mr. Jacob as initiating the program's organization and implementation, a broad range of community interests are represented on the Board of Directors. The desirability of forming a Council on Aging was visible in Williamsburg County to those involved in

public and social services. A crafts program for the elderly had been going on through Office of Economic Opportunity funds for several years and the attendance at it clearly demonstrated the plight of the elderly poor and their need for more extensive services. The elderly required better nutritional, medical, and transportation services. They also needed the social contact provided by group interaction. Thus, leaders involved in the organizational meetings went out into the community to point out the problems of the elderly to other influentials in the community.

Support for the Council has come from many segments of community leadership. The county school and technical education systems, Department of Social Services, County Health Department, Legal Aid, Fire Department, Jobs for Older CItizens Program, and the local garden clubs have all given input and services. Also, active have been County Council, Kingstree Town Council, Clemson Extension Service, Waccamaw Regional Planning Council, and the South Carolina Commission on Aging. While Mr. Jacob provided the technical, organizational, and grant writing assistance, and local government approved the process and implementation and operation of the program has had a wide base of community support.

After three years and two directors, the council has grown to a county wide service employing thirty-four people. Many of those employed are senior citizens hired as "senior aides" to perform a variety of tasks. The program provides many basic services. It provides information and referral services to help senior citizens utilize community resources. It also does community outreach to locate and inform older people of the services available to them. The Council performs a major service in the form of transportation. Three vans and several private cars (with reimbursement for mileage) are used to transport older people to services such as health care, grocery shopping, and social activities. Homemaker, companionship, volunteer and visiting services are also provided to ease the loneliness of those who are homebound and help them maintain independent occupancy of their home. Visitors also go to hospitals and nursing homes when necessary. A major service provided through the council is the nutrition program. Meals are served to those who attend the center. Meals are also delivered to the homes of 33 senior citizens who cannot travel. The current budget for the Williamsburg County Council on Aging is $185,000 (for 1978).

Respondents interviewed saw a variety of benefits from the program in addition to its direct services. Comments included "it keeps community leaders in contact with each other and working for a common goal" and "it makes us more attractive to those moving to Williamsburg County who might be responsible for the care of an elderly person." One leader interviewed mentioned that the program helps keep elderly citizens out of nursing homes who might otherwise have to be there. The program

has also provided an economic boost to retail merchants and medical services in the community by providing transportation to them.

Those interviewed expect further expansion of the program. One board member said that Title IX funds should help expand the staff to fifty employees over the next two or three years. The respondents also expect to reach more citizens in the remote rural areas of the county. Expansion of the meals program is also planned. Those interviewed felt that two factors could inhibit the operation of the Council. The first is lack of money. With the current emphasis on accountability in government programs, restrictions on federal funding dollars are possible. Most of the respondents expected continued funding from local government. The second inhibiting factor mentioned was that of personnel and board member responsibility. One respondent voiced concern that there was not a clear delineation of responsibilities. This lack of clarity, said the respondent, "could potentially cause decay from within." In general, however, this was seen as a manageable problem that needed to be solved as a normal part of the agency growth process.

In general, those interviewed expressed positive support for the continuation of the Williamsburg County Council on Aging. The program has support from both community leadership and the senior citizens themselves. Said one respondent, "We must back it. Whatever we do for the elderly benefits this community at large."

Table 1. Population Trends in Williamsburg County

Year	County Population	Percent Change From Previous Decade
1910	37,626	+19
1920	38,539	+ 2
1930	34,914	-10
1940	41,011	+17
1950	43,807	+ 7
1960	40,932	- 7
1970	34,243	-16
1976 (estimate)	35,000	

Table 2. Williamsburg County Population by Racial Composition

Year	White	% White	Non-White	%Non-White
1910	14,411	39	23,215	61
1920	13,084	34	25,452	66
1930	11,572	33	23,314	67
1940	13,742	34	27,267	66
1950	14,172	32	29,635	68
1960	13,716	34	27,216	66
1970	13,356	39	20,867	61
1976 (estimate)	14,000	40	21,000	60

Table 3. Urban/Rural Population - Williamsburg County

	1950	1960	1970
Total Population	43,807	40,932	34,243
Urban	3,664	3,902	3,389
Percent of Total	8.4	9.5	10.3
Rural	40,143	37,030	30,814
Percent of Total	91.6	90.5	89.7

Table 4. Williamsburg County Population by Age - 1970 Census

	Williamsburg	State of South Carolina
Total Population	34,243	2,590,516
Percent less than 21 years of age	50	43
Percent 21-64 years of age	42	50
Percent 65 years and over	8	7

Table 5. Approximately 20 percent of the active labor force in Williamsburg County is in industrial employment. The employing firms are located in several areas of the county, but concentrated in the Kingstree area. Following is a list of the major industries, products, and approximate number of employees for these firms in Williamsburg County:

Firm	Product	Approximate Employees
Warnaco, Inc.	Lingerie	200
Chelsea Industries	Elasticized Fabrics	45
S & S Milling Company	Animal Feed	11
Atlantic Food Proc.	Egg Processing	47
Travenal Labs, Inc.	Pharmaceuticals & Enzymes	700
Browder-McGill Concrete Prod., Inc.	Concrete Pipe & Prod.	16
Southern Agric. Chem.	Fungicides, Insecticides	45
Drexel Furniture Co.	Veneers & Plywood	97
Warsaw Mfg. Co.	Ladies' Sportswear	275
Kingstree Industries	Ladies' Sportswear	100
Kingstree Mfg. Co.	Wool & Synthetic Yarn	124
Pepsi Cola Bottling	Soft Drinks	32
Koppers Company	Treated Poles & Piling	42
Oneita Knitting Mills	Knitting Mill	300
GB Fermentation Industries, Inc.	Penicillin & Enzymes	190
Colonial Rubber Works,Inc.	Rubber & Plastic	200
Black River Hardwood Co.	Furniture Dimensions	35
Phoenix Glove Co.	Gloves	200
Tupperware, Inc.	Plastics	700

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